

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE - SPOTLIGHT SPECIES ACTION PLAN

Common Name: Golden-cheeked warbler (GCWA)

Scientific Name: *Dendroica chrysoparia*

Lead Region: 2

Lead Field Office: Austin Ecological Services Field Office

Species Information:

Status: Endangered

Recovery Priority Number: 2C

Recovery Plan: Golden-cheeked Warbler Recovery Plan, 1992

Most Recent 5-year Review: None completed; initiated April 21, 2006.

Other: Final listing rule 55 FR 18844

Threats: Habitat destruction both on breeding and wintering grounds, fragmentation, and nest parasitism.

Target: The 5-year goal for this plan is to decrease the decline in status of the GCWA. This goal will be accomplished by analyzing the current status, determining priority recovery actions, outlining methods for implementing those recovery actions, and assisting with the implementation and completion of those recovery actions. Rapid urbanization along the Austin-San Antonio corridor and development in areas of the Texas Hill Country are destroying habitat, often without mitigation. We need to protect key areas of the remaining habitat before options to acquire or otherwise preserve land are lost.

Measure: Increase the amount of habitat protected by 5,000 acres in key areas of the species' range.

Determine the status of each recovery region.

Actions (2010-2015):

1. Update the recovery plan to reflect the current state of knowledge and to assess whether the recovery criteria and regions are still accurate, achievable, and/or applicable. Factors A, C, & E
2. Complete the 5-year status review of the GCWA. Factors A & E

3. Assist with completion, implementation, and monitoring of Regional Habitat Conservation Plans. Factors A & E
4. Work with other partners to protect habitat for the GCWA. Factor A, C, & E

Implementation Schedule: Golden-cheeked warbler, <i>Dendroica chrysoparia</i> (GCWA) Spotlight Species Action Plan 2010 – 2015				
GCWA Action #	Description	Responsible Parties	Cost (dollars)*	Notes
1	Update the recovery plan to reflect the current state of knowledge and to assess whether the recovery criteria and regions are still accurate, achievable, and/or applicable.	GCWA Recovery Team	0	2010-2011
2	Complete the 5-year status review of the GCWA	ES and others	40,000	2010; status review contracted under section 6 grant
3	Assist with completion, implementation, and monitoring of Regional Habitat Conservation Plans	ES, applicants, and their consultants.	0	2010-2014
4	Work with other partners to protect habitat for the GCWA	ES, State, local, and other Federal governments, NGOs	0	2010-2014

* Costs for Service staff time are necessary in each of these projects, but not included.

Role of other agencies: Both Federal and State agencies will be part of the recovery team and will be integral in the review of the species' status and in revising the Recovery Plan. The Department of Defense has played a major role in the conservation of the species at Fort Hood and Camp Bullis. With these exceptions, few agencies take an active role in furthering the goals of the recovery plan for the GCWA. However, there is potential for more involvement from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and others. Particularly with infrastructure development, FHWA, TxDOT, EPA, and USACE could implement more conservation focused policies to further the conservation of this species through mitigation for federally-associated projects.

Role of other ESA programs:

Section 6 Grants

The section 6 grant program can assist in GCWA recovery efforts by funding surveys, preserve management activities, research on the efficacy of land management practices, and land acquisition needed to meet the recovery goals and objectives for this species.

Section 7

Section 7 directs all Federal agencies to use their existing authorities to conserve threatened and endangered species and, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize listed species. Section 7 applies to management of Federal lands as well as other Federal actions that may affect listed species, such as Federal approval of private activities through the issuance of Federal permits, licenses, or other actions. Section 7 activities can result in activities that benefit the GCWA, including take avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and fund surveys for additional GCWA locations.

Section 10

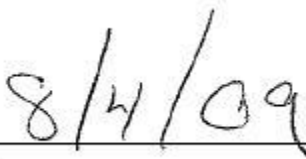
Section 10 of the ESA, states that non-Federal landowners including corporations, State or local governments, and private landowners that may conduct activities that could incidentally harm (or "take") endangered or threatened wildlife are required to obtain an incidental take permit from the Service, to provide exemptions from ESA section 9 prohibitions. To obtain a permit, the applicant should develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that is designed to offset any harmful impacts the proposed activity might have on the species. The HCP process allows development to proceed consistent with conserving listed species, such as the GCWA. In Travis and Williamson Counties, the majority, if not all of the range of the GCWA is encompassed by areas covered by the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan and the Williamson County Regional HCP. These two RHCPs are contributing to recovery by ensuring that any take of the GCWA is offset by establishing or contributing to preserves. In addition, individual HCPs have also been established that resulted in protection of GCWA habitat in perpetuity. Regional HCPs have been drafted for Hays and Comal Counties, and an HCP for Bexar County is in the planning stages. These regional HCPs will be integral in achieving GCWA recovery through mitigation of incidental "take" resulting in preservation of GCWA habitat.

Role of other FWS programs: Other Service personnel familiar with the GCWA from other programs will be invited to participate at each recovery team meeting and will be asked to review and comment on draft documents. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners that are willing to work with the Service and other partners on a voluntary basis to help meet the habitat needs of our Federal Trust Species, including GCWAs. Locally-based Partners biologists work one-on-one with private landowners and other partners to plan, implement, and monitor their projects. The Partners program continues to work with landowners that have GCWAs on their land, educate them about the species, and assist in enhancing the habitat, thus conserving the species through private lands conservation and education. They also assist in identifying land owners that would like to participate in other GCWA conservation projects.

Additional funding analysis: Because several recovery team members are from states other than Texas, the number of meetings will be reduced. Therefore, the majority of the redrafting of the recovery plan will be conducted via email and conference calls. Additional funds could be used to provide travel costs for those team members living outside of Texas so work on the plan

could be done as a team in one venue (estimated need \$25,000). Funding for land acquisition to assist in building preserves that are viable in the long term for the covered species would also be beneficial. Additional funding will assist in achieving our goal of 5,000 acres sooner, or could assist in surpassing this goal (minimum need \$1,000,000). Reviewing, processing, and monitoring of developing RHCPs will require a substantial amount of Service staff time, so funding to hire additional staff would be beneficial. Faster development and implementation of RHCPs allows for quicker preservation of large blocks of GCWA habitat in rapidly urbanizing areas (estimated need \$250,000).


Field Supervisor


Date